

REMARKS

The Examiner has modified the previous restriction requirement to require Restriction to one of Group I: Claims 33-53, drawn to a solid state-area illumination light source, and Group II: Claims 54-71, drawn to a lighting fixture, now stating that Inventions II and I are related as combination and subcombination. While the grouped inventions are not believed to be related as combination and subcombination, but rather are subcombinations usable together in a single combination, Applicant maintains the original election of Group I claims 33-53 for examination purposes.

Claims 33 and 35-52 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirotake et al (USPN 5,013,967). As to independent claim 33, the Examiner states Hirotake et al differs from applicant's claimed light source only in that Hirotake et al does not disclose the organic light emitting diode layer being flexible, as claimed by applicant, and that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide Hirotake et al's light source including flexible organic light emitting diode layer for easing the assembly during manufacturing of the device. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 33 has been amended to be more clearly directed towards an OLED light source adapted to be removably installed by a user in a lighting fixture, wherein the light source is sufficiently flexible to be flexed in a curved three-dimensional configuration and held in and supported by a lighting fixture in the curved three-dimensional configuration, and also to be packed in a planar configuration for compact storage and shipment. Support for the amendments to claim 33 appears generally throughout the specification, and specifically, e.g., at page 5, lines 1, 9-10, 23-24, 29-30, etc., where it is described that the flexible light source is designed for use with a lighting fixture comprising a support 38 or fins 41 for supporting the flexible light source in a shaped or curved configuration, and page 7, lines 25-29 where it is described that the flexible light source also may be packed in a planar configuration for compact storage and shipment. The invention has the advantage that the light source can be packaged and stored in planar configuration until installed in the lighting fixture in a curved three-dimensional configuration by a customer, thereby saving considerable storage space.

Hirota et al discloses an EL lamp manufactured on substrate which functions as a reinforcement member, or wherein the EL lamp is housed in a reinforcement casing, such that the EL lamp has a reinforced mechanical strength against a bending load to enable repeated attaching and detaching from an outlet. Initially, it is noted that Hirota et al only describes non-organic EL structures, rather than organic light emitting diode (OLED) light sources as presently claimed. Rather than be “obvious” to provide Hirota et al's light source with a flexible organic light emitting diode layer for easing the assembly during manufacturing of the device as alleged by the Examiner, manufacture of flexible OLED structures on flexible supports is actually more difficult than on non-flexible (e.g., glass) supports, as evidenced by current industry progress in OLED devices. Thus, it would not be obvious to provide flexible light sources without further motivation, such as provided by Applicant. Further, the teaching of Hirota et al as to providing a lamp with reinforced mechanical strength would in any event appear to teach against manufacture of a light source sufficiently flexible to be flexed in a curved three-dimensional configuration as taught in the present invention. While Hirota et al discloses in Fig. 8(a) and 8(b) embodiments that the lamp thereof may be bent along a line thereof to adjust the direction of illumination, it still requires that the lamp be reinforced which would appear to teach against providing a lamp sufficiently flexible to be flexed into a curved three dimensional configuration (and supported by a light fixture in such curved three dimensional configuration). Reconsideration of this rejection with respect to independent claim 33 is accordingly respectfully requested.

Claims 35-52 depend from claim 33 and are believed patentable for at least the same reasons. Additionally with respect to claims 38 and 40, it is noted that there is no teaching or suggestion to provide multiple tabs or separate conductors located at opposite edges of the light source for any reason, which as taught in the present invention may be advantageous for helping to align the flexible light source of the present invention in a curved three dimensional configuration, such as illustrated in Fig. 6. To the contrary, as Hirota et al is specifically directed towards providing light sources with reinforced mechanical strength, there would be no motivation to provide alternative configurations to those described in order to facilitate alignment of a flexible light source in a three-dimensional configuration.

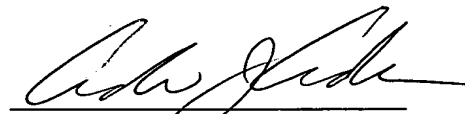
Claims 34 and 53 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirotaka et al (USPN 5,013,967) in view of Goodrich (USPN 5,162,696). As to claim 34, the Examiner states that while Hirotaka et al does not disclose a plurality of light sources in a planar configuration, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide Hirotaka et al's light source in plural form by cascading (repeating) the same device, as suggested by Goodrich for providing plural units. As to claim 53, the Examiner states that while Hirotaka et al does not disclose the light source having a shape of a ring segment, it would have suggested to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide his light source in a ring segmented shape, as an alternative design, as evidenced by Goodrich, as applicant's claimed ring shaped segments does not solve any particular problem that is not solved by the prior art light source. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Goodrich discloses light emitting diode (LED) display panels 2 comprised of individual LED elements 3 arranged on a flexible display, wherein the display panels are encased in a flexible light-transmissive envelope provided with suction cups to make the LED apparatus unit attachable to vertical surfaces and self-supporting. Individual inorganic LED elements 3 are themselves individual lamps, which when employed together with a control element enable a moving message display as explained in Goodrich. There would accordingly be no reason to combine the teachings of Goodrich (directed towards a moving message display) and Hirotaka (directed towards individual EL lamps) as proposed by the Examiner. Such combination would also in any event be taught against, as Hirotaka et al is specifically directed towards light sources with reinforced mechanical strength as discussed above, rather than flexible display apparatus as taught by Goodrich. Additionally, as to claim 34, even if the references were to be somehow combined, they would not result in the claimed invention, which has been amended consistent with page 7, lines 25-29 and Fig. 14 to more clearly be directed towards an embodiment wherein a plurality of light sources in planar configurations are stacked for compact storage and shipment, and which accordingly clearly distinguished from the multi-panel display configuration of Goodrich. Finally, as to claim 53, the Examiner's comments that applicant's claimed ring shaped segments does not solve any particular problem

that is not solved by the prior art light source is not well taken, as the specifically claimed ring segment embodiment enables the claimed light source to be flexed into a conical configuration, thus advantageously enabling a conventional three-dimensional conical lamp shape to be obtained from a light source packed in a planar configuration. Such feature is not taught or suggested by Goodrich. Reconsideration of this rejection is accordingly respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully requested. A prompt and favorable action by the Examiner is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner believe any remaining issues may be resolved via a telephone interview, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' representative at the number below to discuss such issues.

Respectfully submitted,



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If the Examiner is unable to reach the Applicant(s) Attorney at the telephone number provided, the Examiner is requested to communicate with Eastman Kodak Company Patent Operations at (585) 477-4656.